

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 L-03 H-02 DHA-02 /022 W
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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3269

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0639

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PFOR

SUBJECT: WILLIAM THOMAS CASE

REF: TRIPOLI 632, TRIPOLI 583

1. THOMAS' LAST THREE DAYS IN TRIPOLI PROVIDE AN INTERESTING CASE STUDY OF THE FRUSTRATIONS OF DEALING WITH LIBYAN GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY. ON MONDAY, MAY 3, AS WE WERE ABOUT TO CHECK WITH CONSULAR DEPT MFA ABOUT THE CASE, MRAWHIL IN PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE ASKED TO SEE THOMAS. MRAWHILL SAID THAT THE CASE WAS FINISHED, THAT NOTHING DEROGATORY HAD BEEN UNCOVERED ABOUT THOMAS, AND THAT ON TUESDAY MORNING HE WOULD GET HIS PASSPORT AND A LETTER TO IMMIGRATION REQUESTING EXIT PERMIT.

2. ON TUESDAY MORNING, MRAWHIL CHANGED HIS TUNE, SAYING THAT CASE NOT FINISHED BUT THAT PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE HAD BEEN ORDERED BY HIGHER AUTHORITY TO LET THOMAS GO. HE CLAIMED PASSPORT WAS IN PROSECUTOR BARUNI'S SAFE, AND THAT LATER IN THE DAY WE COULD GET BOTH PASSPORT AND LETTER, WHEN FSL RETURNED IN AFTERNOON, HE WAS TOLD PASSPORT LOST AND LETTER NOT READY. FORTUNATELY FSL HAD REPLACEMENT PASSPORT WITH HIM AND WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE BARUNI TO PREPARE LETTER ON THE SPOT.

3. THE NEXT SNAFU WAS IMMIGRATION, WHICH HAD ALREADY CLOSED FOR THE DAY, DIRECTOR AND DUTY
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OFFICER HOWEVER SAID EXIT PERMIT WOULD BE ISSUED

EARLY NEXT MORNING, IN TIME FOR THOMAS TO CATCH
FLIGHT TO ROME. WEDNESDAY MORNING IMMIGRATION
DIRECTOR SHOWED UP LATE, FORCING THOMAS TO DELAY
DEPARTURE UNTIL THE AFTERNOON.

4. NOTE VERBALE IS BEING SENT TO MFA REQUESTING RETURN
OF THOMAS' PASSPORT AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS WHICH
TAKEN FROM HIM ON JULY 29 AND NEVER RETURNED.
CHARGE PLANS TO RAISE QUESTION OF FINANCIAL COMPENSATION
FOR THOMAS WITH MFA. HOWEVER, SINCE IT APPEARS HE WAS
PARDONED RATHER THAN ACQUITTED PROSPECTS ARE MURKY.

5. THOMAS, OF COURSE, WAS DELIGHTED TO LEAVE BUT BITTER
ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, VERY GRATEFUL FOR USG
EFFORTS AND SUPPORT. WE TOO ARE PLEASED THAT THOMAS COULD
REJOIN HIS FAMILY. OUR PLEASURE, HOWEVER, IS TEMPERED
BY THE SOUR RECOLLECTIONS OF LONG, FURSTRATING AND UN-
SATISFACTORY DEALINGS WITH THE LIBYAN GOVT ON THE
SUBJECT. THROUGH A CHANCE ENCOUNTER IN THE DESERT
THE CASE IS NOW CLOSED. IT IS NOT FORGOTTEN, HOWEVER.
NO EXPLANATIONS HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING; OUR NOTES
REMAIN UNANSWERED AND WE STILL WONDER WHAT IT WAS
ALL ABOUT.
CARLE

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